AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1-10 (cancelled).

11. (New) A piezoelectric actuator, comprising:

piezoelectric ceramic layers stacked to form a multilayer stack;

an electrode layer provided between each of the piezoelectric ceramic layers; and

an outer cover layer provided on each end face of the actuator;

wherein the piezoelectric ceramic layers and the outer cover layers each have a predetermined dielectric constant, the outer cover layers having a lower relative dielectric constant than the piezoelectric ceramic layers between the outer cover layers.

12. (New) The piezoelectric actuator as recited in claim 11, wherein the outer cover layers are joined to the actuator.

13. (New) The piezoelectric actuator as recited in claim 11, wherein the outer cover layers are each joined to a cover of a cylinder surrounding the actuator.

14. (New) The piezoelectric actuator as recited in claim 11, wherein the outer cover layers are each adjacent to an electrode layer.

15. (New) The piezoelectric actuator as recited in claim 11, wherein the outer cover layers are each provided on a ceramic layer.

16. (New) The piezoelectric actuator as recited in claim 12, wherein the outer cover layers are manufactured from a piezoelectric ceramic.

17. (New) The piezoelectric actuator as recited in claim 14, wherein a relative dielectric constant of ceramic of the outer cover layer is decreased by admixture of additives.

18. (New) The piezoelectric actuator as recited in claim 13, wherein the outer cover layers are each joined to a ceramic layer by one of coating, gluing or soldering.

19. (New) The piezoelectric actuator as recited in claim 13, wherein the outer covers layers are each manufactured from one of quartz, a glass, an adhesive, a lacquer, a solder or silicon dioxide ceramic.

20. (New) The piezoelectric actuator as recited in claim 13, wherein the outer cover layers are designed to be rigid and inelastic.